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Firefighters Graduate Firefighter I Plus Recruit Training
Fallen Lancaster Firefighter Marty McNamara Honorary Class Member

State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan and Massachusetts Firefighting Academy Interim Director Richard Farrar presented certificates of completion to members of the *Firefighter I Plus* recruit training class in a graduation ceremony on Sunday, June 27, 2004. The recruit graduation took place at the Mary Rowlandson Elementary School in Lancaster, Massachusetts.

The *Firefighter I Plus* program is unique in that it delivers a standard recruit training curriculum, meeting national standards, on nights and weekends to accommodate the schedule of firefighters in suburban and rural areas. Bringing the training closer to the firefighters often means more firefighters can participate. All of the classes for this program were held in Lancaster. The Massachusetts Firefighting Academy, a division of the Department of Fire Services, offers this program, tuition-free. The Fire Chiefs' Association of Massachusetts persuaded the Legislature to financially support this innovative delivery of off-site training.

Farrar said, "The academy welcomes the challenge to deliver rigorous training to firefighters in new and innovative ways and different formats that make the best possible use of available resources. The *Firefighter I Plus* program is an example of how we can meet this challenge."

The thirty-three graduates, twenty-nine men and four women, represent the twelve fire departments of: Berlin, Bolton, Carlisle, Charlton, Clinton, Harvard, Holden, Holliston, Lancaster, Princeton, Shrewsbury and West Boylston.

Special Tribute to Fallen Lancaster Firefighter Marty McNamara

The class asked that fallen Firefighter Marty McNamara, who had been scheduled to take part in this training, be named an honorary member of the class. The class presented Mrs. Claire McNamara, Marty's widow, with the class flag.

Today's Fire Department Does Much More than Fight Fires

Today's firefighters do far more than fight fires. They are the first ones called to respond to chemical and environmental emergencies ranging from the suspected presence of carbon monoxide to a gas leak or unknown white powder. They may be called to rescue a child who has fallen through the ice or who has locked himself in a bathroom. They rescue people from stalled elevators and those who are trapped in vehicle accidents. They test and maintain their equipment, ranging from self-contained breathing apparatus to hydrants, hoses, power tools, and apparatus.

In this Massachusetts Firefighting Academy program, they learn all these skills and more from certified fire instructors who are themselves experienced firefighters. Students learn all the basic skills they need to respond to fires and to contain and control them. They are also given training in public fire education, incident command, hazardous material incident mitigation, flammable liquids, self-contained breathing apparatus, stress management, water rescue procedures, confined space rescue techniques, and rappelling. The intensive program includes classroom instruction, physical fitness training, firefighter skills training and live firefighting practice. Graduates have completed 140 hours of training on nights and weekends.

Basic Firefighter Skills

Students receive classroom training in all basic firefighter skills. They practice first under non-fire conditions and then during controlled fire conditions. To graduate, students must demonstrate proficiency in life safety, search and rescue, ladder operations, water supply, pump operation, and fire attack. Fire attack operations range from mailbox fires to multiple-floor or multiple room structural fires. Upon successful completion of the *Firefighter I Plus* program, these firefighters are now eligible to take the practical portion of the examination for certification to the Firefighter I level by the Massachusetts Fire Training Council.